

Lehigh Valley Railroad Station
7 South Avenue, Southwest corner of South
Main Street and South Avenue
Cortland
Cortland County
New York

HABS No. NY-5594

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5594

LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD STATION

Location: 7 South Avenue, southwest corner of South Main Street and South Avenue, Cortland, Cortland County, New York.

Present Owner: Nick Deloisio, 122 Elm Street, Cortland, New York.

Present Occupant: Cortland Press.

Present Use: Printing company.

Brief Statement of Significance: A symbol of the importance of the railroad to the City of Cortland and a good example of the design attention given to stations of this period.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:
Lehigh Valley Railroad until
1959 - Purchased by Wickwire Brothers, November 30, recorded Book 221, page 161 at County Clerk's office, Court House, Cortland, New York.
1968 - Sold by Wickwire Brothers.
1972 - Purchased by Nick Deloisio.
2. Date of erection: 1910-1911, cost \$27,519 (letter from H. F. Reilly, Chief Engineer, Lehigh Valley Railroad Company, 425 Brighton Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18015, February 17, 1965.)
3. Architect: J. J. McGleece.
4. Builder, suppliers, etc.: The builder is listed in Cortland Standard, March 29, 1911, as John Bender, Corning, New York. In another news item it is John Benzer of Corning. But Mr. Gifford Harrington, 48 Union Street, Cortland, New York, still at the Lehigh Freight Station in 1965, reports conversations with Mr. John Benger, then of Cortland, concerning his building of the "new" station. There is a Benger Block on South Main Street, Cortland, and other building in the city is attributed to him. Electrical supplier--Southwick & Company, Cortland, New York; furniture by the Peck Furniture Company of Cortland, New York; and large clock

from A. M. Jewett, Cortland, New Jersey (Cortland Standard, March 29, 1911).

5. Original plans, construction etc.: Partial transcript from Cortland Standard, March 29, 1911:

"NEW LEHIGH VALLEY STATIONS OPENED--Formally, on Tuesday, April 4--Public invited to Call and Inspect Them...

The Passenger Station

The passenger station is 155 feet long and 50 feet wide, including the pavilions or projecting roofs over the platforms and is two stories high. It is constructed of brown vitrified rockfaced brick for the base course extending up to the window sills, where there is a belt course of hummel stone, brown-stone trimmings. From the belt course to the roof, including the second story, the walls are composed of hollow tiles with cement stucco finish. The brackets, canopy beams, etc., are of yellow pine stained Flemish green and varnished. The canopy lanterns are of black iron.

On the ground floor is the general waiting room, 23 by 25 feet, a women's retiring room twelve-and-one-half feet square, a smoking room and a ticket office 26 by thirteen-and-one-half feet.

The waiting room is finished with paneled wainscoting and beam ceilings done in chestnut, stained Flemish green and finished flat. The floor throughout is of marble terrazzo. The settees match the wainscoting and are heavy in construction. The walls are tinted cream color and the paneling is painted green.

The lighting fixtures, which were installed by Southwick & Company of Cortland, who did all the electrical work, include square bronze electroliers and side brackets finished in Pomboian [sic] green.

The women's room is finished similar to the general waiting room. On the west wall is a handsome full length pier glass mirror, which will be appreciated by all women patrons of the road. The room is also furnished with mission chairs, table, etc.

West of the rooms described is a passageway extending across the building separating the main part of the station from the baggage room, which is 15 feet wide, 25 feet long, well lighted, provided with sliding doors and a concrete floor.

On the second floor are four offices, two either side of a dividing hall, for train dispatching, telegraphing, administration purposes, etc.

The station is provided with a tile roof finished with terra cotta hip and ridge rolls. On the east or Main Street side the canopy or roof extends for 34 feet over the platform.

A cellar 18 by 26 feet under the central part of the station furnishes the necessary room for the heat apparatus, etc.

The station is heated by steam throughout and lighted by electricity, and standpipes and an abundant supply of hose provides fire protection. A concrete platform surrounds the station."

It is said (Cortland Standard, 1910 between July 2 and July 6, Blodgett Scrap Book, vol. 19, page 108, Cortland County Historical Society) that some of the brick used in the construction was probably originally used in the old County Jail and Court House on Court House Hill which was demolished in 1871, the brick then being used above the first ten feet in the smokestack of the Cortland Horseshoe Nail Company, later bought by the Lehigh Valley Railroad for car shops.

6. Alterations and additions: When rented to Progressive Printing Company by Wickwire Brothers, the partitions surrounding the ticket offices were removed.
- B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure: The formal opening on Tuesday, April 4, 1911 was celebrated with gifts of postcard pictures of the station and a lengthy article in the Cortland Standard, the local paper.

Arrivals and departures of noted personages were also reported by the papers.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: An enlargement of what was probably the souvenir postcard distributed on opening day, is a view of the south or track side of the building.
2. Bibliography:

Blodgett Scrap Book, vol. 20, page 55 at the Cortland County Historical Society (A clipping from the Cortland Standard, March 29, 1911).

Cortland County Chronicles. vol. I. Pages 103 ff.
Published by the Cortland County Historical Society.
1957.

Grip's Historical Souvenir of Cortland. 1899.

3. Interviews:

Mr. Cleland Cook, 148½ Homer Avenue, Cortland, New York,
a student of local railroad history.

Mr. Andrew Shapley and Mr. Gifford Harrington, Lehigh
Freight Office, South Avenue, Cortland, New York.

Mr. Jack M. Hawthorne, 5 Owego Street, Cortland, New York,
of the Progressive Printing Company.

Mr. Chester Wickwire, 90 South Main Street, Homer, New
York, of Wickwire Brothers.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

More local newspapers for historical events associated with
the railroad. Biographical material on the architect and
on the contractor.

Prepared by Dorothy E. Graves
Cortland County
Historical Society
April, 1965

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest and character: An eclectic
structure combining many elements of the popular mission
style with utilitarian interior spaces and a functional
relationship with the railroad tracks.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Number of stories: One and one-half.

2. Foundations: 18' x 26' cellar--cement walls.

3. Wall construction, finish: "Brown vitrified rockfaced
brick for the base course extending up to the window sills"
then "a belt course of hummel stone brown-stone trimmings",
then "hollow tiles with cement stucco finish to the roof."
(Cortland Standard, March 29, 1911)

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4. Structural system: Brick bearing walls and wooden framing.
5. Chimneys: One interior brick chimney to east of center dormer.
6. Opening: Low five-centered arched window openings, small paned windows. A large dormer with two double windows faces north, and a similar dormer faces south. There are no shutters.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The original specifications called for a tile roof finished with terracotta hip and ridge rolls.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Double brackets support overhanging eaves.
 - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: There is a large dormer window in the north and south slopes of the roof.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. First floor: On the east end is a large waiting room. To the west of this room, is a ticket office on the south (track side) and a women's parlor and rest room on the north. On the west end of the building are a men's room and stairway. The baggage room at the west end is separated from the main section by an open passage through the building.
 - b. Second floor: The central part of the building is a hall running lengthwise (east-west), with two offices on either side.
2. Stairways: There is one stairway at the southwest corner of the hall which leads to the basement and the second floor.
3. Flooring: Terazzo (marble).

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, ceilings beamed. Waiting room--paneled wainscoting of chestnut.
5. Decorative features and trim: Arched openings with simple trim.
6. Notable hardware: Original hardware on outer doors.
7. Lighting: No original fixtures left.
8. Heating: Central heating by steam. A stoker has been installed.

D. Site and Surroundings:

The tracks parallel the south side of the station. South Avenue, formerly Railway Avenue, is on the north. A freight building which was remodeled to match the station, when the station was built, is the only outbuilding.

Prepared by Dorothy E. Graves
Cortland County
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records are part of the documentation of structures in the Southern Tier of New York State, undertaken by HABS in cooperation with the Cortland County Historical Society and the Valley Development Foundation, Inc.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The historical and architectural material was prepared by Dorothy E. Graves in April, 1965. Photographs were taken by Jack E. Boucher, April, 1966. The project was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Constance Werner Ramirez, November, 1974, and Eleni Silverman, May 1984.

Lehigh Valley Railroad—New Passenger Station, Cortland, N. Y.

1911

